

NEWS RELEASE

Kansas Department of Transportation News Release

April 30, 2009

#09-045-00

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Topeka and Lawrence Transit Agencies to Receive Stimulus Grants

The Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) will distribute a total of \$3 million to public transit agencies in Topeka and Lawrence. The award is part of the agency's distribution of public transit funding made available for economic stimulus through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA).

The state expects to receive about \$30 million in ARRA transit funds, divided into rural and urban categories. \$16 million of that amount will be distributed by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) directly to urban transit providers that serve areas with populations of 50,000 or more. From the remaining \$14 million for rural transit, KDOT will distribute \$1 million to the **Lawrence Transit System** and \$2 million to the **Topeka Metropolitan Transit Authority** for vehicle replacement. These funds will be in addition to the ARRA funding the two urban transit providers will receive directly from the FTA. ARRA funding cannot be used for operating support.

Based on a formula from the FTA, KDOT expects the ARRA transit funding to create or sustain about 840 jobs.

KDOT will use the rest of the rural transit money to fund grants to 10 rural public transit providers, upgrade 15 radio towers used by transit agencies and provide for a future intercity bus service. The specific amounts are detailed below. About \$835,000 will be held in reserve in case some of the purchase or project costs were underestimated.

"Transit in Kansas provides important economic, health, and social benefits by giving citizens without regular access to a personal vehicle a way to get to work or to make personal trips and to maintain their independence. In urban areas of the state, buses help alleviate traffic congestion and reduce air pollutant emissions," said KDOT Director of Planning and Development Chris Herrick.

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“We are happy to help the transit systems in Lawrence and Topeka. We know that they have extensive vehicle replacement needs and this funding will go a long way toward modernizing their fleet.”

Rural Transit Services

KDOT has selected 10 agencies to receive more than \$4.6 million. The ARRA funding is only available for capital projects that can be started within 180 days, such as purchasing vehicle and dispatching equipment and building facilities, stops or shelters. The rural transit projects were also evaluated on their abilities to increase or improve services in un-served or under-served areas and to implement regional coordination efforts. The following providers will receive grants: **Johnson County Transit-Rural Johnson County Program**, \$130,000; **Leavenworth County**, \$155,000; **Nemaha County Transit**, \$54,000; **Riley County Area Transportation Agency**, \$520,000; **Lyon County Area Transit**, \$369,500; **OCCK - Salina**, \$1,082,000; **DSNWK - Hays**, \$109,000; **Reno County Area Transit**, \$291,000; **Sunflower Diversified Services - Great Bend**, \$192,000; **Finney County Transit**, \$1,710,000.

Radio Towers

KDOT will devote \$3.5 million to upgrading 15 radio towers around the state to provide 800 MHz communications. The tower locations were selected to support local transit services and the upgrades will enable the transit providers to communicate with their vehicles over longer distances. The towers are located in the following counties: **Cloud, Dickinson, Ellis, Ellsworth, Hamilton, Jewell, Kearny, Lane, McPherson, Mitchell, Osborne, Rooks, Russell, Scott and Washington.**

Intercity Bus Service

Under ARRA, 15 percent of the rural transit allocation must be used for intercity transit, so KDOT will set aside \$2 million for that purpose. An intercity bus service is envisioned between Wichita and Salina and between Wichita and Pueblo, Colorado. In May, KDOT expects to issue a request for proposals from private bus services and will select a provider from the pool of bidders. KDOT is coordinating with Colorado officials to develop the service.

Kansas public transit services provided approximately 10 million rides for residents across the state in 2007. Over the last eight years, transit ridership in urban and rural Kansas has grown by 48 percent.

More details about the ARRA public transit applications and grants can be found online at www.ksdot.org/EconomicStimulus.asp